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## ABSTRACT

This digest describes three complementary approaches to integrating guidance into education: (1) the Comprehensive Guidance Program Model, developed by Norman C. Gysbers; (2) the Teacher Advisor Program (TAP), developed by Robert D. Myrick; and (3) the Invitational Learning paradigm, developed by William W. Purkey. Four references are included. (TE)

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# DIGEST

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## Guidance—The Heart of Education: Three Exemplary Approaches

Thomas I. Ellis

### Introduction

During the 1980s, when *A Nation At Risk* (1983) set the tone for public discourse on education and when politicians throughout the country were clamoring for educational reform, school districts came under great pressure to raise academic standards, lengthen the school day, implement state-mandated basic curricula, and otherwise become more accountable to taxpayers. But by and large, the advocates of "educational excellence" at that time paid virtually no attention to addressing the urgent personal or emotional needs of our students.

Fortunately, a new school of thought is emerging among educators and counselors. Unlike the reform movement of the past decade, this new movement takes full account of students' personal needs in formulating educational goals. Proponents of this school of thought recognize the close relationship between students' academic development and their personal growth; accordingly, they are seeking to place guidance at the heart of the educational process. The three exemplary guidance programs presented here represent three different, but compatible approaches to this goal.

Norm Gysbers' *Comprehensive Guidance Program Model*, and Robert Myrick's *Teacher Advisor Program* are both based on the idea that guidance is an integral part of a school's educational mission rather than an "ancillary" service peripheral to the curriculum. This idea in turn presupposes an enlightened humanistic conception of education, which recognizes and validates the intrinsic dignity of every student, and which attends empathetically to students' personal and developmental needs. This conception forms the basis of William Purkey's *Invitational Learning Model*, a new paradigm for schooling that seeks to reconstitute the entire school setting—people, places, policies, programs, and processes—so that every aspect of the school serves to "invite" students to learn by respecting them, encouraging them, and validating their unique importance and possibilities.

### The Comprehensive Guidance Program Model

Since 1971, Norman C. Gysbers and his associates at the University of Missouri-Columbia have been developing, field-testing, refining, and implementing the *Comprehensive Guidance Program Model*, an innovative, program-based organizational plan that has been adopted by school districts throughout the nation. The foundation for the Model—the theoretical basis for identifying the guidance, knowledge, skills, and attitudes (competencies) that students need is called *Life Career Development*, defined as self-development over a person's life span through the integration of roles, settings, and events in a person's life. Accordingly, this Model emphasizes three domains of human growth and development:

- **Self-knowledge and interpersonal skills.** Helping students to develop awareness and acceptance of themselves and

others, and to develop personal standards and a sense of purpose in life.

- **Life roles, settings, and events.** Emphasizing knowledge and understanding of the interrelatedness of various life roles.
- **Life career planning.** Appraising personal values as they relate to prospective life career plans and decisions.

The *Comprehensive Guidance Program Model* consists of three structural foundations and four interactive program components. The structural foundations—definition, rationale, and assumptions—emphasize the centrality of guidance to the total education program, and define the relationship between guidance and other aspects of the curriculum. The four program components delineate the major activities, and the roles and responsibilities of personnel involved in the guidance program:

- **Guidance curriculum**, or structured classroom activities, organized around the three domains of student competencies;
- **Individual planning**, including activities designed to assist students in monitoring and understanding their own growth and development;
- **Responsive services**, such as information seeking, crisis counseling, and teacher/parent/specialist consultation.
- **System support**, activities geared toward program management and operations;

One principal rationale behind the *Comprehensive Guidance Program Model* is to enable counselors to regain control of their time on the job by allocating 100 percent of their time to the four program components discussed above—guidance curriculum, individual planning, responsive services, and system support. The *Comprehensive Guidance Program Model* is oriented above all toward student development; it is a programmatic framework which allows counselors to devote their primary attention to guidance activities and structured group experiences for all students.

### The Teacher Advisor Program

The assumption behind Robert D. Myrick's *Teacher Advisor Program (TAP)* is that each student needs a friendly adult in the school who knows and cares about him or her in a personal way. The advisors help their advisees deal with the problems of growing up and getting the most out of school. A teacher-advisor is usually responsible for an advisee's cumulative folder, work folders, teacher-student conferences, parent conferences, group guidance experiences and follow-up on academic progress reports. Advisors also consult with other teachers, school counselors, and support personnel about their advisees.

TAP is designed to provide an opportunity for all the students in a school to participate in a small and cohesive group of 15 to 25

peers led by a sensitive and caring teacher who promotes and monitors individual students' educational and developmental experiences as they progress through school. Teacher-advisors meet with their advisees on a regular basis through a "homeroom" or "homebase" group. This becomes, in effect, the students' home within the school, where they have a supportive teacher and group of peers with whom they can explore personal interests, goals, and concerns.

The guidance curriculum varies from one school to another, but it generally addresses personal, social, and academic concerns. Some of the personal and social skills addressed include getting acquainted, self-esteem, and time management. Academic topics might include policies and procedures from the school handbook and computing grade point averages. Career and educational planning topics include career exploration and choices, employability skills and the job market.

Since many high school teachers have never had a guidance course and many are unsure of how to lead a group discussion with adolescents, teachers may need special preparation in how to work with their students and how to build guidance units for their groups. Counselors can therefore assist teachers in developing guidance units, or they can work together as a team in developing and delivering a guidance curriculum, with counselors taking over homebase groups on occasion. It is important, therefore, to establish a cooperative and supportive relationship between teachers and counselors so that they can define their respective roles and differentiate responsibilities.

To enlist the support of a school's faculty for TAP and developmental guidance, it is essential that all teachers understand the philosophy of TAP and commit adequate time to it. Counselors should therefore provide a developmental guidance curriculum guide to establish guidance objectives and provide activities, but allow teachers to choose or discard suggested activities according to their needs. Since most teachers need more training in how to help students solve personal problems or get them working cooperatively in small groups, counselors also may need to assist teachers in developing guidance and interpersonal skills. Administrative support and periodic evaluation are also essential.

### Invitational Learning for Counseling and Development

The **Invitational Learning** concept, developed by William W. Purkey, offers a blueprint of what counselors, teachers, principals, supervisors, superintendents, and others can do to enrich the physical and psychological environments of institutions and encourage the development of the people who live and work there.

**Invitational Learning** is based on four value-based assumptions regarding the nature of people and their potential and the nature of professional helping:

- **Respect:** People are able, valuable, and responsible and should be treated accordingly;
- **Trust:** Education should be a collaborative, cooperative activity where process is as important as product;
- **Optimism:** People possess untapped potential in all areas of human endeavor; and
- **Intentionality:** Human potential can best be realized by places, policies, programs, and processes that are specifically designed to invite development, and by people who are intentionally inviting with themselves and others, personally and professionally.

In a school or any other organization, everything is connected to everything else. And so, in applying **Invitational Learning**, everything counts in creating an environment that invites individuals to reach their potential:

- **Places.** Creating an attractive and inviting physical setting is the easiest way to begin the process of incorporating the **Invitational Learning** concept into a school or other organization.
- **Policies.** Professional counselors can assist schools in developing policies that encourage student responsibility and participation rather than those that create pervasive anxiety, mistrust, and mindless conformity.
- **Programs.** Programs that incorporate the assumptions of **Invitational Learning** include incentive programs such as peer counseling for dropout prevention, faculty mentoring, and other collaborative programs where students, teachers, and counselors all gain by helping and encouraging one another.
- **Processes.** How we teach or counsel and how we act while doing these things are far more important in the long run than what students or clients learn. Educators and counselors in successful schools establish behavioral norms of collegiality, professional development, mutual assistance, and ongoing discussion of instruction and curricular improvements among themselves, and they cultivate attitudes of respect for all students and attention to their needs in all of their interactions.
- **People.** The daily interaction between teachers and students, counselors and clients, and professionals amongst themselves, ultimately determines the success or failure of **Invitational Learning**. Counselors and teachers who wish to employ **Invitational Learning** therefore need a sound knowledge of human development.

The goal of **Invitational Learning** is thus to provide an optimally inviting total environment, both for professional helpers themselves and for those with whom they work. In this respect, it is fully compatible with both the **Comprehensive Guidance Program Model** and the **Teacher Advisor Program**. All three approaches affirm the centrality of developmental guidance to the educational process, and all are predicated on mutual respect and human dignity—for counselors, teachers, and students alike.

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